



**East
Hartford
Public
Schools**

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TESTIMONY

Committee Bill No. 5078

AN ACT IMPOSING A MORATORIUM ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Good morning/afternoon Madame Chairperson, Mr. Chairman, Representative McCrory, Senator Bye, Rep. Ackert, Senator Boucher and all members of the Education Committee here today. My name is Jeffrey Currey and I am the Chairman for the East Hartford Board of Education.

I am here today to express our concern regarding Committee Bill No. 5078, an act imposing a moratorium on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. I am here to represent both the district I serve and the roughly 7200 students that attend 16 schools in our large urban school district.

I have serious concerns regarding the direction that this bill, if approved, would take regarding the progress we have made in Connecticut and in particular, in East Hartford Public Schools. I want to crystalize and make exceedingly clear that supporting this bill will result in education taking a drastic step back from the growth we have seen over the recent years and a move towards an uncertainty and delay that will negatively impact the lives of the children currently in our school systems. While I fully recognize the enormity of the changes going on in education at this moment, I ask that you also be mindful of this when it comes to dealing with children, Connecticut's future.

I ask you to remember that the Common Core State Standards are simply a national set of standards that were adopted by our great state in 2010. The Common Core is not the driving source behind every confusing homework assignment or foundational mathematical quagmire that has gotten so much attention of late. Rather they serve as overarching guides to challenge educators to find consistency of expectation when we talk about delivering on our promise to the next generation of American citizens. East Hartford has focused on developing district expertise regarding the state standards and how our curriculum can become a document that breaks the adage of "if you continue to do what you've always done...you will continue to get what you have always gotten..." As I speak here today, I am humbled by the



number of high quality teachers, principals, department heads and specialists in my district who believe deeply in where we are going, but have not been able to give this belief voice for a variety of reasons. The moratorium that has been proposed to you today would be an incredible blow to the work that they have begun and fully intend to finish.

Before you heed or put too much stock in the voice of the critic of the Common Core or any of the changes sweeping our country in regards to education reform, I challenge you to carefully listen for their solution. When their solution voice is absent (as it often seems to be) or lacks the sense of urgency that is so necessary when it comes to dealing with the education of our children, I ask you to think of the second grader who will only have second grade one time. Unfortunately, as we are painfully aware, if we are unable to get this second grader the necessary interventions he or she needs, this second grader will continue to struggle in both school and life moving forward. With this picture in mind, are you really willing to argue that we should “slow down?” or stop all together.

Rather than a moratorium, I urge you as the leaders of our great state to rather take a critical look at implementation from the lens of how we could provide greater supports to districts to accomplish the work that has been started. Rather than a moratorium, I urge you to find ways to make our work more efficient, our changes more coherent and our future successes even brighter. I urge you to continue as you have done over the past three years under the leadership of Governor Malloy, to support funding through both the Alliance Grant and other channels that have provided my district with a first—a “funded mandate.” I want to thank you for the resource support we have received from your work as legislatures and assure you that the money you have invested to date in this initiative is having early returns in my district. Moving in a different direction will undoubtedly initiate a catastrophic sense of confusion and doubt that will cause long and lasting damage as Connecticut seeks to remain competitive on a national and global scale.

I want to express my appreciation for your awareness and focus on the importance of the changes going on within the world of education. While it is not every day that a discussion of curriculum or instruction reaches the average Connecticut dinner table, I am appreciative of the interest that has lately been placed on the important work of growing Connecticut’s future.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today and for your willingness to be a part of Connecticut’s solution.

